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14 April 1954

MEMORANDUM TO: Colonel White

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1. This week's agenda for the CIA Career Service Board is concerned mainly with a report of the Task Force on promotion policy.

2. The Task Force proposes approval of a new CIA Regulation  to incorporate a promotion policy. I am keenly disappointed in the paper proposed by the Task Force. It makes no attempt whatever to provide any assurance that when people are promoted they are the people who have been determined to be the best qualified people available from within whatever is regarded the appropriate area of consideration, whether office, major component, career service designation, or entire Agency.

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3. Under the proposed policy a person who is within the "zone of consideration for promotion" (which merely means he meets minimum time-in-grade requirements) may be proposed for promotion by the appropriate office head, and when the action goes to the Personnel Office it will be finally approved if it conforms to the provisions of the Regulation which are threefold:

- a. time-in-grade,
- b. existence of position,
- c. meets qualification requirements established for the position, or has demonstrated ability to perform.

Under the proposed policy, the Office of Personnel presumably would not intervene to discourage or disapprove a promotion request (if the three requirements are met) even if it seems clear that other persons are better qualified and more deserving of the promotion. In other words, if the operating official makes a promotion request which is clearly susceptible to the charge of favoritism or inequitable action, Personnel can do nothing to oppose it if the individual meets the minimum qualifications.

4. The only gesture made by this policy statement to offset the defect described above is a statement (para. 4.c.) of the responsibility of the heads of career services, as follows: "The head of each career service or his duly appointed designee is responsible for insuring, in coordination with operating officials, that all employees of that Career Service are considered for promotion in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation." This stuff, of course, is purely platitudinous.

5. I was surprised to note that the Personnel Office representatives agreed to this policy which emasculates the Personnel Office from operating

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in any effective control-role in the field of promotions. I have talked about it to George Meloon who said he thought it was a major flap within Personnel, but that he would not hesitate to recommend to Mr. Reynolds that he oppose it at the Career Service Board.

6. I am especially disappointed in this policy statement because it does not face up to the problem of doing something for people who have reached the top level of promotion opportunities within their own career service designation but who may be promotable to other organizations or career services where logical progression lines exist. The proposed policy contains nothing which would tend to give these people any hope of advancement.

7. It is difficult to follow through in any case on the principle of promoting the best person qualified, because it is probably impossible to evaluate accurately all the factors which would determine who the best candidate for promotion is in any given situation. However, it is significant that this promotion policy does not even state as an aim that the person to be promoted should be the best qualified.

8. The proposed policy falls short in other respects also. Instead of putting the Personnel Office in the position of sitting and waiting for operating people to propose employees for promotion, personnel officers should be planning promotions with operators well in advance of receiving the formal request. When personnel officers participate in promotion planning, supervisors accept more readily suggestions that they consider qualified employees known to the personnel officers on an Agency-wide basis. There is nothing in the policy which would tend to develop this Personnel staff activity other than the statement that the AD/P is responsible for "assisting officials at all levels in carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with this Regulation." It is, of course, necessary to avoid reliance on mechanical techniques in administering a promotion program. Yet, I find it strange to note that no mention is made at all of the availability of the Personnel Office Skills File (maintained on IBM records) in order to locate candidates for promotion - assuming that some Agency components would be genuinely interested in isolating the best qualified candidate for promotion, regardless of his location in the Agency.

9. The remarks above do not, by any means, reflect all of my unfavorable impressions on the proposed policy. I think it would be a mistake to have it adopted.

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